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## Local

### Lantos blasts president's handling of war

Edward Carpenter, The Examiner

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**SAN FRANCISCO** - Four years after voting to authorize the war in Iraq, Congressman Tom Lantos has done an about-face, becoming a leading proponent of the effort to bring troops home by next summer.

Just days before the fourth anniversary of the war's start, Lantos, D-San Mateo, was deeply critical of the Bush administration's strategy, calling it "spectacularly mismanaged" in an interview with The Examiner on Friday.

"The dream of erecting a prosperous and peaceful democracy in Iraq won't happen in my lifetime or yours," Lantos, 79, said.

Instead of stabilizing the country with sufficient troops, political leaders and the military allowed underlying civil strife to fester into a full-fledged civil war, said Lantos, who has served 13 terms and chairs the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. Adding more troops in a proposed "surge" won't do any good, he said.

"You can't unscramble an omelet," Lantos said.

Defending his initial support for the war as being based on the intelligence available at the time — which later turned out to be false — Lantos said legislation he now supports would redeploy troops back home and to Europe by August 2008.

The bill, crafted by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-San Francisco, and others, was approved this week along mostly partisan lines in a vote of the House Appropriations Committee and could be brought to the full House this week.

It would approve \$124 billion in emergency spending, including an estimated \$100 billion to continue the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, but institute strict deadlines over the next 18 months calling on the troops to return home sooner than next summer if benchmarks go by the wayside.

[ecarpenter@examiner.com](mailto:ecarpenter@examiner.com)

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